

May had prophesied) was slipping fast away, and days, almost weeks, went on, and still no pupils came. At last the note about the two expected ones arrived from Miss May, and with a beating heart Hilda found herself ringing at the bell of the gate of Octavia Villa, Brixton, and having been admitted into the neat grounds, was kindly received by Octavia herself.

This was the name that the schoolgirls (among themselves) usually gave to their mistress. The "ancient Octavia," they called her, after the name inscribed on her villa gates, though the name had been there long before Miss May had taken the house.

But if girls, with homes and fathers, felt inclined to laugh at Miss May and her peculiarities, the homeless and fatherless girl to whom she had been kind certainly did not. Miss May kissed Hilda, and then, having discreetly closed the drawing-room door, proceeded to give her ex-pupil what she called a few hints.

"Now, my dear," she said, "I've got a few words to say to you, and the first of these is, remember, you are not going among gentle-folk."

Hilda smiled at this good-temperedly.

"Rich people can buy nearly everything," continued Miss May, "but they can't buy fine feelings. They can get fine houses, fine carpets and curtains, but they can't get the gentle delicacy of the well-born in a hurry. I'm an old woman now, and have gone through life in a dependent position, and therefore I'm a good judge—the lower and more vulgar people are, the ruder and more inconsiderate they are to any one who is obliged to work for their daily bread."

"I can understand that," said Hilda.

"Well, I suppose that it's natural," said Miss May, pithily. "However, to go on with, the ladies—you see I give them the title by courtesy—who are coming here to-day to see you, are not real ladies. They are the wife and daughters of a Mr. Moxam, who is a merchant in the city, and a very rich man, and they presume on this and are very disagreeable young women in consequence."

"Still they want music lessons?" said Hilda, laughing.

"They want a young person—pray remember you will be considered a person at Florentia Villa—to practise daily with the young ladies, so that (as Mrs. Moxam graphically remarked) the favoured young person may 'push them on.' Their 'pa' she says, is anxious that they should be first rate musicians, and they have expensive lessons twice a week, but they don't practise enough. They want some one to grind them, in fact. Do you understand?"

"I think so," answered Hilda.

"And now, my dear, I wish to give you a hint," continued Miss May, "how to behave to people with no grandfathers. You must—"

But here she paused abruptly, for a rap came to the room door, and the next moment Miss May's neat waiting-maid announced:

"Mrs. and the Misses Moxams."

"Ah, Mrs. Moxam," said Miss May, advancing to receive her visitors perfectly at her ease, for she always said that she had gone through so much that she would not be disconcerted if the king entered the room, though she did not specify which of their defunct majesties she would have received with composure. "Well, my dears" (this was addressed to the Misses Moxams); "and how are you this cold day?"

"Only pretty well," answered Mrs. Moxam, languidly. "In fact, as I tell Mr. Moxam, another year I am determined to winter abroad."

"Well, it's the fashion you know," said Miss May.

"And so essential to health," said Mrs. Moxam.

"Have you ever been abroad for a winter?" asked Miss May, who had a perfect knowledge that Mrs. Moxam had not.

"Well, not exactly," replied Mrs. Moxam, hesitatingly. "But about this young person of whom you spoke, Miss May," she added, changing the conversation, "can we see her?"

"This is the young lady I mentioned to you," said Miss May, moving her hand in the direction of Hilda. "Allow me to introduce Miss Hilda Marston."

Mrs. Moxam bowed coldly on this to Hilda, and the Misses Moxam bowed coldly. Then all the three ladies looked her over as they would have looked over a dress or a shawl lying on a linen-drawer's counter. She was purchasable also, so naturally they thought they had a right to examine her.

"You—ah, teach music, I think?" said Mrs. Moxam, affectedly.

"Yes," answered Hilda, the burning blush on her face betraying what she was feeling.

"Ah—well—Do you understand high class music, do you think? Are you competent to push on these young ladies after they have received instructions from Signor Salvati, whose charges, as perhaps you are aware, are immense?"

"I—I—hope so," faltered Hilda.

"Miss Marston is quite competent," interrupted Miss May with decision, "otherwise I would not have recommended her. She is a young lady of natural musical ability, and she has been well instructed."

"Ah, I dare say—well then, Miss Marston, what are your terms?"

Then followed a polite wrangle between Mrs. Moxam and Miss May, about what terms Hilda should ask. Mrs. Moxam evinced a surprising meanness during this discussion for so fine a lady, and Miss May showed a good deal of the energetic sharpness which sometimes distinguished her.

While the two elder ladies were arguing the point, Hilda Marston sat covered with confusion and with her eyes cast down; but the Misses Moxam looked occasionally at each other, and smiled superciliously. At last Hilda rose, and laid her hand entreatingly on Miss May's arm.

"Don't say any more, please, Miss May," she half-whispered. "I'll take what Mrs. Moxam considers right."

Mrs. Moxam heard the whisper and saw the girl's piteous look, and she grew in consequence a shade less hard. Miss May also slightly modified her demands after Hilda's appeal, and finally the ladies came to terms. It was then agreed that Hilda was to go every day to Florentia Villa, and practise music and singing for two hours with the Misses Moxam. For this she was to receive a certain remuneration which Mrs. Moxam agreed to increase if she gave satisfaction.

"And my son Joe," said Mrs. Moxam, before she took her leave, with no small pride in her voice and manner, "will, I dare say, sometimes join his sisters in their duets. He has a fine voice, a true bass I'm told, but he wants a little cultivation they say, though for my part I think he sings extremely well as it is."

"My dear," said Miss May to Hilda, after their visitors were gone, "you must take care of your heart. Young Moxam, whose bass voice you are to have the honour of cultivating, is simply the most odiously vulgar, ill-bred young man I ever met, and that is saying a good deal."

CHAPTER XXV.

"HOW WONDERFUL IS DEATH!"

While Hilda Marston was thus beginning her new career in London, at a village by the sea, on the coast of Devon, Mrs. Hayward was dying.

She knew it, and she knew it, who watched and waited on her with a girl's tenderness, who, in accepting Sir George Hamilton's generous gift, had laid self aside for her sake, though his heart had revolted so bitterly at the thought. But, for his mother Hayward had done this, so that she might have every comfort and luxury to soothe her last hours.

They were very peaceful ones. Outside the morning sun was glittering and shining on the winter sea, whose waves came rippling and rolling into the bay. Inside, the mother lay, with her hand clasped fast in her son's; while, kneeling by the bed-side, in solemn, gentle tones, Horace Jervis, the curate, was reading portions of the Bible that he thought suitable to one who was so near a closer knowledge of their truth.

Mrs. Hayward had not spoken for some hours. Her eyes were apparently closed to all outward things, and yet as the waves broke she seemed to hear them, for her fingers slightly moved, as if with instinctive sympathy to the sound. On her face was the pallor of coming death, but round her lips lingered, as if it could not go, the sweet and patient smile which had been one of her characteristics during the later years of her life.

Philip Hayward looked pale and baggared. He had been sitting up all night with his mother, and his face was worn and sharpened. For her heat and burden of the day was over; for him the toil, the sweating brow, the weary task, was still to come.

"The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth them, and delivereth them out of all their troubles," read the curate. "The Lord delivereth the souls of His servants, and they that put their trust in Him shall not be destitute."

Then, as he paused a moment, the dying woman began to murmur some inarticulate words, and both the young men started and looked in her face as she did so.

They saw there was a strange and glorious change. The dim eyes had opened, and the closed lips moved. She was looking upwards, as if she saw beyond the narrow confines of the scene around. A look serene, but full of joy and wonder, had usurped the usual placid, patient expression of her face.

"She sees heaven!" said the curate, in a voice of awe.

"Mother! mother!" cried Hayward, and as that loved voice reached the ears that were about to close to earthly sounds, she looked back once more on her dear son's face.

"Mother, do you know me?" again asked Hayward, and she answered by stretching out the hand that was not in her son's, towards Horace Jervis.

"Be his brother," she said, addressing the curate, in the husky tones of death, who eagerly sprang forward, and clasped her hand. "Be a brother to my boy after I am gone."

"I will," said Horace Jervis, fervently.

"There will be no sighing nor sorrowing there, Philip," continued Mrs. Hayward again looking upwards. "None—none—And then—even as she spoke—a glory that was not of earth again seemed reflected on her face, her eyes once more lit up with wonder and delights, and with a smile of ineffable joy and trust, the next moment her spirit had passed away.

"She is with God," said Horace Jervis, falling on his knees, while Hayward gave a startled, awe-struck cry.

"My brother!" then said Horace, holding out his hand. "Hush," he added the next minute, "she may hear still—grieve not her parting spirit by the thought of your distress."

So the two men knelt there still and silent. The waves came rolling and breaking into the bay. The voices of the children playing on the shore, and the harsh cries of the fishermen as they moored and unmoored their boats, broke at

intervals on their ears, but they seemed to hear them like those who dream. They were in the presence of the mystery of Death. Between them and the woman who had just spoken, had come a silence that would end no more. The loving mother, the faithful friend, could not now speak words of comfort. She was gone! The awful and inevitable hour was come, when all that are born of woman must taste of death.

Later in the day, when the dusky evening had crept over the sea, and the mists had wrapped the rocks and headlands, making them seem weird-like and mysterious in the murky gloom, Philip Hayward and Horace Jervis were walking together on the shore.

"Pardon me, but I think you are wrong, Philip," said the curate.

"Perhaps so," answered Hayward, gloomily, "but what matter? I have nothing to live for now."

"Nay do not say that," answered Horace Jervis. "We all have something to live for, all to hope for, all to toil for. The nobler and higher a man's career is, the more good he may do—therefore I wish my brother to be ambitious."

The curate had a sweet thrilling voice, through which truth seemed to vibrate, and as he spoke he gently pressed the arm of Hayward, on which he was leaning, who was deeply touched by the young man's kindness.

"So you mean to keep your promise—to her—" said Hayward, in rather a broken voice. "Then I shall not be quite alone in the world."

"Not as long as God spares me," answered Jervis, simply. "But as I was saying, I think you are wrong," he continued. "This Sir George Hamilton seems an honourable and generous gentleman, and in accepting help from him to push you forward in any career you may choose, you are incurring no debt. Remember he is indebted to you for what no money could purchase."

"There are reasons," said Hayward, briefly, "why I cannot accept any more favours from Sir George Hamilton. While my mother lived it was different. For her sake I would have done almost anything. Now I shall return to town, and Newcome will, I've no doubt, give me back my old post."

"Do not decide hastily," urged the curate. "Come to me at all events, first. I want you to help me with my work," he added with a smile. "And you must not be angry—I think my brother is too good a man for a printer's office."

"It gives me daily bread—that is enough," said Hayward, and he turned his head away to hide the bitter emotions passing in his heart. Yes, these were bitter days for Hayward. Days when he learned that the man whose money he had taken, whose money had soothed and comforted his mother's last hours, was now wedded to Isabel Trevor, had been wedded the very day after he had accepted such a favour from his hands.

When he knew this, pangs of shame, humiliation, of fierce anger and pain took possession of his heart. He fought and wrestled with these like a brave man, hiding his feelings for his mother's sake so that she might pass her last days in peace. But there were dark hours that she knew not of, and groans wrung from his pale lips that the sea birds only heard. Night after night he used to wander on the shore while the stars looked down on his restless agony. Then the change came, and his mother's end grew nigh. The wild passion that tore his heart grew pale in the presence of death. The eternity that she was about to enter dwarfed the strongest and bitterest of mortal pangs.

But although this was so, on one point they left him resolute. He would accept no further favours from Sir George Hamilton. Though by far the larger portion of the sum Sir George had forced upon him remained untouched in his hands after his mother's death, he yet gave orders for her funeral to be conducted in the most simple and modest fashion. He had made up his mind, in fact, to return Sir George's money, and to decline all further assistance from him.

"She shall not taunt me for being a hanger-on of a rich man, at least," he thought with curling lip. Yes, he thought of her still. He was thinking of her when Horace Jervis urged him not to refuse Sir George's offers; when he decided to throw away all chance of rising in life, and to content himself with unambitious toil.

"These will give me my daily bread," he said, holding out his strong brown hands, as the curate continued to urge him not absolutely to decline Sir George's proposal.

"But what about the strong, clear brain?" said Jervis. "Will you hide the talents that are your master's gift, or as the good and faithful servant did, use them to the honour and glory of His name?"

(To be continued.)

THE GLEANER.

THE London Standard is to pay the Post Office 2,000l. a year for a single line of wire to Paris. The paper is to have three hours daily exclusive use of this wire.

THE Pope has sold the sole remaining ship of his navy, the *Immaculate Conception*, stationed at Toulon. The admiral and two captains who were aboard are superannuated.

A SELECTION of the Rev. A. Cyril Pearson's chess problems is about to be issued. Mr. Pearson is well known as an ingenious constructor of chess puzzles. Mr. Taylor's collection of Chess Clips has just been published by the same firm.

THE property of Pius IX. is being sold at the Vatican every Wednesday and Saturday. Everything from superb jewelled crucifixes to empty bottles is offered for sale, which is semi-public, under the superintendence of Monsignor Pericoli. Every article is priced very low.

Ancient as well as modern thought finds its representatives now-a-days. Statuettes of Sennacherib, Sardanapalus and his Queen, modelled from the marbles in the British Museum, are being advertised. The enterprise is said to be under the patronage of Her Majesty and of the Grand Duke Constantine of Russia.

"COOKING" is the term for a neat job in photography by which a beautiful young lady's head may be attached to the nude form of Diana, Venus or any other female in the symptom of dress worn by female divinities. A young girl saw herself as Mazeppa the other day in a shop window in London, and it cost her papa 100l. to buy up all the "cooked" pictures.

A PARISIAN musician has suggested a new way to test the sweetness or compass of a voice. Cause a candidate tenor or *prima donna* to sing before the cage of a lion or tiger; if the animal does not roar, the conclusion is favourable for the voice; if the contrary, the sooner all parties decamp the better.

IN ORBITUM PRINCIPISSE ALICIE.

Filia cara, soror dulcis, fidissima conjux, Mater, sui soboles vitæ pretiosior ipsa, Te tua voce unâ gemit Anglia, te memor isdem Prosequitur lacrymis, te nunquam oblita silebit.

MAKING artificial flowers is quite an art in Paris, and many ladies are now learning to turn it into a profession, which is certain to prove remunerative to those who are skilful. It is a pretty, cleanly, amusing occupation, demanding no special vocation and no great outlay for tools, etc.; and already teachers in the art are advertising courses of lessons. Never were artificial flowers more in demand than in the present day—dinner as well as ball dresses being trimmed lavishly with them. It has become a custom at large dinners to place a small bouquet on the serviette of every lady guest; the style of the bouquet is known as "Jardiniere," because it is of mixed flowers, but always seasonable ones.

HEARTH AND HOME.

INNATE POWER.—The most abundant advantage and the most generous education can never supply the lack of brains, or implant innate power, or compel untiring perseverance. If they could, there might be some justice in regarding the academy or university as the rival of self-education, and in distinguishing rigidly between the self-made man and the college-made man. As it is, every one whose life amounts to anything at all is self-made in the true sense, whether he be favoured with outward helps or not. He must not only supply the foundation of a capacity to learn, but must also furnish a continual relay of power in the form of assiduous and patient labour. The fact cannot be too deeply impressed upon the young.

CHARACTER AND WORK.—None of us can pass through this world without encountering obstructions to our progress which time only will enable us to surmount, and perplexities which a hasty, petulant spirit will only augment. The eminent philosopher Newton said that his successes in science were attributable to patient thought. And all who have been illustrious for their attainments or achievements would, did they bear testimony, speak in similar terms. The growth of intellectual power, the acquirement of worldly possessions, and the formation of an admirable, lasting reputation require much time. That which, mushroom-like, is to be of few hours' duration, may, mushroom-like, occupy but a brief period in springing into existence. But the character and the work which are to spread wide and tower high and endure long must have a broad, deep, well-laid foundation.

LIVING IN QUIET.—A rule for living happily with others is to avoid having stock subjects of dispute. It mostly happens, when people live much together, that they come to have certain set topics, around which, from frequent dispute, there is such a growth of angry words, mortified vanity, and the like, that the original subject of difference becomes a standing subject for quarrel, and there is a tendency in all minor disputes to drift down to it. Again, if people wish to live well together, they must not hold too much to logic, and suppose that everything is to be settled by sufficient reason. Dr. Johnson saw this clearly with regard to married people, when he said, "Wretched would be the pair, above all names of wretchedness, who should be doomed to adjust by reason, every morning, all the minute details of a domestic day." But the application should be much more general than he made it. There is no time for such reasonings, and nothing that is worth them. And, when we recollect how two lawyers or two politicians can go on contending, and that there is no end to one-sided reasoning on any subject, we shall not be sure that such contention is the best mode for arriving at truth. But certainly it is not the way to arrive at good temper.

It is valueless to a woman to be young unless pretty, or to be pretty unless young. If you want a first-class shrunk Flannel Shirt, send for samples and card for self-measurement, to TREBLE'S, 8 King Street E., Hamilton, Ont.